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PRACTICAL.

VOCAL EXECUTION.

WE have said that the sacred text which forms the basis of devotional song, must have an utterance which is at once musical, distinct, and impressive. The dull, syllabic manner, as we have seen, is inseparable from the early stages of cultivation; and we might have added, in reference to the subject of accent and emphasis, that the earliest exercises of drilling will necessarily be mechanical. The enunciation will at first appear clumsy and artificial. The language will seem harsh and constrained. The thoughts will often be obscure and ambiguous; and the poetic numbers will not seem to flow. The sibilants, mutes, gutturals, &c., will give harshness to the voice, and for a time, operate as a serious detriment to the melody. Old habits are inveterate; and in many cases they will not be eradicated without much time and perseverance. And, what is peculiarly unhappy for the cause of devotional music in this country, the prevailing habits for many years past, have been nearly alike adverse to the claims of melody and of distinct enunciation. The voice has literally to be formed anew in both respects, before it can be rendered properly musical and impressive, as an instrument of public edification. Teachers themselves have been deplorably deficient. They have needed themselves to be taught the very first principles of their art. Their habits of style have been erroneous, their methods of teaching unintelligible, their maxims false, and their decisions dogmatical. This truth, painful as it is, must be told. Whole schools, and neighborhoods, and districts of country have been literally taught to sing in a nasal, labial, slender and feeble manner, wretchedly out of tune, and without accent, emphasis, or articulation: and, what is still worse, they have in too many instances been filled with the notion that such a style is preferable to every other; and that all who wish to change it, are lawless innovators upon the commonwealth of musical

taste. In such places we shall be told that nature makes the voice, and genius alone, the teacher ; that intonation is a natural gift, that few of our race can be taught to sing, that the words must be sacrificed to the music, and that systematical instruction generally ends in mere musical affectation. A talented teacher, it is true, might eventually succeed in making a favorable impression, in many places of this description, if he had any means of acquiring a competent support ; yet for the most part, this will be withheld. After the impression shall have been made, the means of his subsistence will be but partially supplied.

But let us suppose a teacher not destitute of talents, to be employed for a few short months, in some place where there is, on the whole, a decided wish for improvement. How shall he manage in order to accomplish the greatest amount in a limited space of time ? The choir, we will suppose, have some knowledge of notation ; but their voices are rather unformed and dissonant, while the subject of *vocal* enunciation has been neglected as a practical impossibility.

1. The whole work must in the first instance be laid open before them in an inviting manner ; and the various branches explained to their familiar apprehension. This is not a difficult task. It requires no great amount of logic to prove that the words of a psalm or hymn ought to be distinctly spoken in song : and when the various properties of tone, articulation, accent, &c., are taken separately in hand, ordinary singers will soon be made to perceive that they are things quite within their reach. Oral illustrations and striking criticisms should accompany the whole statement ; and the singers themselves, should take some part in the exercises. All this may be done in a single evening.

2. It is an important principle in early exercises, to call the attention to one single thing at a time ; as otherwise, the mind will become embarrassed, and the attention fatigued. A few exercises upon the vowels for disciplining the tone of voice, may be followed, for example, by the articulation of a few single phrases of language, and these in their turn, may give place to exercises in harmony, time, accent, and emphasis : but, in every case let the criticisms be wholly confined to the single point taken in hand ; and, on the first symptoms of uneasiness among the singers, let them for a little time be suspended.

3. As a number of new tunes must be committed to memory, the drillings above mentioned, can occupy but a small portion of a given evening. This will afford opportunity for greatly diversifying the exercises of the school, and thereby securing the incessant attention of the pupils.

4. The drillings should be confined to passages of music which are perfectly familiar, till a good measure of progress shall have been secured: then by degrees the separate processes may be combined, till the singers attain to some share of mechanical accuracy in their performances; when new tunes as well, as the old, may be made the basis of the exercises. Some weeks will elapse before these several properties of style will combine themselves in the same musical exercise; and in the meanwhile a number of new tunes will have been committed to memory, all of which will of course have received a share of critical attention.

5. Most teachers aim at nothing higher than mechanical accuracy in these performances; but this is no place for the termination of instruction. It is rather, we might almost say, the very place of commencement. The higher claims of language must now be brought to bear upon the performances. So far as harmony is concerned, the slow tunes are preferable; but for time, articulation, accent, and emphasis, the quicker movements will be found the most useful. In reference to enunciation, the singers may now be allowed to diminish somewhat from the quantity of unaccented notes, in favor of short syllables and momentary pauses. Notes need seldom be protracted in length, and as often as they are abridged, the time of the measure must be made up of corresponding rests, too diversified in length, for accurate notation. Here let the teacher read the lines or stanzas as a sample of the performance required; and let him sing passages in various ways, as specimens for imitation. This will try the talents of a vocalist. The teacher must himself be a good singer, if he would wish others to form an agreeable, impressive style. By this means alone, the style of enunciation will gradually improve. Example will here be preferable to precept. Imitations of the teacher's style will be more and more successful, till at length, an easy flow of the language will take the place of artificial mechanism and tedious monotony.

At this period of instruction, care should be taken, to rid the pupil as far as shall be found practicable, of their affected habits of pronunciation and provincialisms of dialect. These when distinctly drawn out in musical sounds, have a disagreeable effect, far beyond what is noticed in public speaking. In the latter case they are readily pardoned if the subject is sufficiently important: but not so in the former. Vocal music claims to be a species of impassioned elocution; and the deliberate manner in which the accents fall from the lips of the singer, subjects every syllable to the critical notice of the hearer. It is not enough

therefore, that pronunciation is made to flow onward in a smooth current. It must be chastened and polished. It must be freed on the one hand from affectation, and on the other from vulgarity. This requires no little taste ; and in ordinary choirs, perhaps, it will continue to be in a measure neglected. Yet the individual who aspires to the character of an accomplished vocalist, ought to know the importance of this subject and not rest satisfied with his attainments till his enunciation becomes so chaste and polished, that the words which flow from his lips, may not of themselves draw off the attention of the listener from the thoughts and feelings which they are intended to convey. Whatever other attainments he may possess, yet wanting this, his style will be radically deficient. He may be a musician in theory ; but he cannot be properly called a vocalist. He might as well be called a linguist without possessing a knowledge of languages.

This subject cannot be too well understood among practical musicians, nor too much insisted upon by theoretical writers. Its full importance is not in general sufficiently realized. But the above must suffice for the present.

WATTS AS A CHRISTIAN POET.

IN our occasional criticisms upon the hymns of Watts, we have never lost sight of the considerations that he wrote more than a century ago ; and that he was virtually the founder of a new style of versification. These circumstances are more than sufficient to account for redundancies, defect, and blemishes which are occasionally to be met with among some of his less interesting productions, while his best ones are often imitable. The following tribute is paid to him by the Poet Montgomery in his *Christian Psalmist* :

DR. WATTS may almost be called the inventor of hymns in our language ; for he so far departed from all precedent, that few of his compositions resemble those of his forerunners ; while he so far established a precedent to all his successors, that none have departed from it, otherwise than according to the peculiar turn of mind in the writer, and the style of expressing Christian truths employed by the denomination to which he belonged. Dr. Watts himself, though a conscientious dissenter,

is so entirely catholic in his hymns, that it cannot be discovered from any of these, (so far as we recollect,) that he belonged to any particular sect; hence, happily for his fame, or rather, it ought to be said, happily for the Church of Christ, portions of his psalms and hymns have been adopted in most places of worship where congregational singing prevails. Every Sabbath, in every region of the earth where his native tongue is spoken, thousands and tens of thousands of voices are sending the sacrifices of prayer and praise to God, in strains which he prepared for them a century ago; yea, every day, "he being dead yet speaketh," by the lips of posterity, in these sacred lays, some of which may not cease to be sung by the ransomed on their journey to Zion, so long as the language of Britain endures—a language now spreading through all lands whither commerce, civilization, or the Gospel, are carried by merchants, colonists, and missionaries.

It might be expected, however, that, in the first models of a new species of poetry, there would be many flaws and imperfections, which later practitioners would discern and avoid. Such, indeed are too abundant in Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns; and the worst of all is, that his authority stands so high with many of his imitators, that, while his faults and defects are most faithfully adopted, his merits are unapproachable by them. The faults are principally prosaic phraseology, rhymes worse than none, and none where good ones are absolutely wanted to raise the verse upon its feet, and make it go, according to the saying, "on all-fours;" though, to do the Doctor justice, the metre is generally free and natural, when his lines want every other qualification of poetry. Under this charge, much allowance must be made for the author, on recollection that these blemishes were far less offensive when he flourished, than they are in the present more fastidious age, which requires exacter versification, with *pure, perfect rhymes*: not to gratify a craving ear with an idle jingle,—for bad rhymes are much more obtrusive than good ones,—but to form a running harmony through the verse, which is felt without being remarked, and yet so essential to the music of the whole, that the occasional flatness or absence of one is instantly recognised, and produces a sense of wrong; though, while the rhymes are true to their tone and their place, the frequent recurrence of them is no more noticed than the perpetual repetition of particles in every sentence that can be constructed; yet any omission or superfluity of these is immediately perceived and resented by correct taste. It is a great temptation to the indolence of hymn-writers, that the quartain measures have been so often used by Dr. Watts, without rhyme in the first and third

lines. He himself confessed that this was a defect ; and, though some of the most beautiful hymns are upon this model, if the thing itself be not a fault, it is the cause of half the faults that may be found in inferior compositions,—negligence, feebleness, and prosing.

DIVISIONS OF LABOR.

IN almost every department of human effort, the division of labor is found to be an important principle. We see it in our manufacturing establishments. We see it in our commercial transactions, and monied institutions. The various branches of effort or subdivisions of labor are severally sustained by the individuals who make up the band or company employed : and thus the work is greatly facilitated. A person instead of having to do twenty distinct things in an awkward, imperfect manner, devotes himself to one with such incessant application as to acquire the greatest dexterity ; and thus, through the perfection of the several branches, the sum total of effort is found to be the more productive and satisfactory. The same principle exists in the department of education. We have not only our primary schools, academies, colleges and universities, but in each, individual instructors of the various branches. We have, to some extent at least, our writing masters, arithmeticians, and grammarians ; our chemists, naturalists, and astronomers : our linguists, logicians, and rhetoricians : and though some will pretend to be such universal geniuses as to understand and teach every thing ; yet men of information will be ready to set them aside, as shallow pretenders, while they employ others who having some general acquaintance with all of the liberal branches, devote themselves to some one of them in particular. Nor is this all ; the separate branches are often subdivided. We have among linguists, for example, our French, our Spanish, our Italian and our Greek teachers ; our professors of the Oriental languages ; and our translators and lexicographers. In philosophy, we have a natural, a mental, and a moral department ; in history, a civil and an ecclesiastical department ; and in rhetoric and belles lettres, we have our critics, our poets, and our writers of prose. In painting, also, there are various departments. One devotes himself to miniatures, another to portraits, a third to caricatures, a fourth to landscapes and sketches of scenery, and a fifth to historical subjects ; and of historical painters, too, one will be

eminent for coloring, another for attitudes, a third for perspective, a fourth for expression of sentiment, and a fifth for special originality of invention.

And who that knows any thing about the subject of music can fail to observe here the operation of the same principle. We have men enough that pretend in music, to be universal geniuses; and no doubt, every thorough musician ought to have some general acquaintance with all the separate branches of the art. Yet more than this should hardly be expected, if we look for distinguished excellence in any one branch. In Europe, one man devotes himself to the flute, another to the violin or violoncellos, a third to the horn, a fourth to the drum, a fifth a sixth and a seventh severally to the harp, the piano-forte, and the organ. Of the class of vocalists, some are for solos, some for choruses, and some for recitatives or bravuras; and these again are subdivided into sopranos, altos, tenors, &c. And of these there is a sacred and a secular department, too often blended in practice it is true, yet perfectly distinct in theory: and of sacred music there is the oratorial school, and the school of devotional music, which are totally different in their design and influence. Nor is this all. There are in musical literature, mathematical experimenters, speculatists, theorists, and composers; and of the latter, those which excel only in some one department.

Now, if any one wishes to know why there are so many differences as to opinion and practice among musicians in this country, he is here furnished with an ample reason. Our young and enterprising republic, has not yet given music its place among the liberal branches. The art is but little cultivated among us. We have, properly speaking, no national school, no distinctive characteristics of style. Our amateurs are superficial, our theorists and critics are but partially acquainted with the subjects of which they treat: and, with all their disadvantages, there is such a general veneration of the European taste and trans-atlantic execution that Amercian effort and influence are continually thrown into the back ground, which, indeed, it must be confessed, is too often the more appropriate place.

Here is the foundation of the existing differences. Our nation obtains at best, only the second or third rate talent of Europe; men who have moderate skill in some one department of the art. "A little learning," says the poet, "is a dangerous thing." These men as soon as they reach our soil, begin, very naturally to feel their superiority, and to despise, instead of encouraging native talent. They see so much ignorance around them, that "measuring themselves by themselves," and

"among themselves," they are tempted to set up for universal geniuses. What should hinder? In some *one* department they can *here* distance all competitors; and what is more natural than for them to aspire to universal dictatorship? The consequences, however, are most disastrous. To say nothing of the quarrels of the secular school which have sometimes been sufficiently abundant; and to pass over the differences and imperfections which pervade the oratorial associations; the devotional school, we are sorry to say, has for a long time, through such mismanagement, been made to bleed at every pour. It has been abused, oppressed, insulted, almost literally annihilated. Men of no character or principle, no devotion or solemnity, have been made the chief musicians for the house of God; and, in too many instances, have succeeded in driving out of the ranks, all who have any claims to the character of spiritual worshippers. And where there has been more character or principle, there has still existed, a pitiable ignorance of human nature, or perhaps a still greater ignorance of the special nature of devotional singing. Hence we see *skilful* vocalists preferring the secular embellishments of song, to the detriment, and perhaps to the total neglect of chaste, impassioned enunciation. We see distinguished organists, very ignorant; it may be, of vocal music, showing off their wonderful powers of execution, astonishing their bearers with overwhelming combinations and successions of harmony, French, Spanish, Italian, and German peculiarities, perhaps, all based upon some simple theme of a psalm or hymn, which serves as the subject for flourishes and variations. Doubtless, they are the men; and wisdom shall die with them! The poor vocalists, are at best but so many empty cyphers at the right hand of an important digit, to add only to his own consequence, as the minstrel of minstrels for the holy temple!

Let us not be misunderstood. We are not opposed to instrumental music. We would not banish it from the churches. We would retain it. But then we would have it so far accessory to the voices of the worshippers, as to assist instead of overpowering them: we would have voices become sufficiently prominent to secure the purposes of devoutly "speaking to one another," and to the congregation intelligibly, and with the true vocal effect.

The distinguished foreign musicians that visit our shores, we are sorry to say, have often need to be taught what are the very first principles of devotional music; and though there are honored exceptions to this remark, they are not sufficiently numerous to have a controlling influence upon the public taste. Christian worshippers in this country, must be upon their guard and apply the proper remedy for existing evils.

Nor are we by any means unfriendly to foreign *vocal* talent. We would honor it. Both as to instrumental and vocal music, our nation has been greatly indebted to foreigners. In critical sagacity, in scientific intelligence, and in practical execution, we are outdone on some occasions, even by the second-rate talent of trans-Atlantic climes. But, one thing at least, we will not yield to foreigners, that is the cultivation of *common sense*. Here we shall, as a nation, have claims that are not to be relinquished. We know *ourselves*, better than foreigners can know us. We can best ascertain our own musical circumstances, and wants, and feelings. And certainly, without any *superior* pretensions to vital religion, we can best tell, what kind of music as well as what style of execution and management is actually securing among our cultivators, and auditors, the most hallowed Christian influences. Here let American cultivators take their stand, and never be driven from it. It is their own department of labor. It is their musical birth-right. Nothing can alienate it. Let us give due honor to the men that can excel us in some *one* department, and be grateful imitators of their excellences. Yet let us not copy their real defects, or redundancies. Let us not presume upon the *infallibility* of individuals, even in their accustomed department, and especially when they aspire to embrace too many *untried divisions* of effort. We will keep our own appropriate place, and honor them, just so far as they keep theirs, and no farther.

After all, the most difficult men to deal with, in musical subjects, are not always of trans-Atlantic origin. Among our own citizens, there is enough of narrow-minded prejudice, and jealousy, and ill-founded pretension, in some cases, to distance all the pretensions of foreigners. Half-made men of any clime are liable to become troubiers of the musical commonwealth: and for ourselves, we shall rejoice to see the day, when this country will furnish the means of a thorough musical education, adapted to its own special wants and peculiarites as a Christian nation. Till then, nothing remains but to make the best of every thing; and to manage as well as may be, on the sound principles of Christian prudence and liberality. Let us do this, in every thing which relates to the music of the church; and then we may safely look to the great Master of Assemblies for his presence and blessing.

HINTS TO PIOUS TEACHERS.

THE standard of devotional feeling in regard to church music is every where confessedly low. Pious teachers have abundant evidence of the

fact, as well as too much occasion for personal regret. They have many temptations and discouragements; far more than are to be encountered in the ordinary walks of activity. They have few helps, and many hindrances. A whole church, and perhaps the minister also, will be standing directly in their way; and contributing unconsciously to bid away from the school, the few remaining demonstrations of spiritual life.

But under these, and even greater circumstances of discouragement, there is still *one* resource which when effectually tried, is never known to be unavailing. We are prone to neglect it; and to try every thing else in preference, leaving the only potent remedy as the last resort. This is wrong. Why not try, at once, the never-failing remedy? Let the pious teachers carry the whole case to the mercy seat. There is *One there*, who will never refuse to listen, never become weary of hearing, never undervalue the importance of devotional music, or be indifferent to existing abuses; One who will never approve of heartless offerings or sacrifices to the idolatry of personal amusement, or display: and One who can always tell the difference between self-gratifying sensibility, and true devotion of soul. The closet is the place for special help. Now in the early stages of instruction is a good time. Perhaps others will be induced to go and do likewise; and even to remember the singing school in the little circles for social prayer. Try earnestly, continually, and hope for success. Ask for large things: ask in faith, and with expectation. Blessings will doubtless follow. Talk not of hindrances. Make it a personal object to get near to the mercy seat; and to set a decided example of holy living in connexion with your efforts. Such exertions will not be lost.

DIVISIONS OF LABOR AMONG CHRISTIAN PROFESSORS.

We commenced the above article with the intention of offering some special remarks, which on further reflection, we thought might better be formed into a distinct head. We allude to divisions of labor among Christian professors. Some men are missionaries at home, and others abroad. Some are devoted to the temperance cause, others to Bible or tract distribution, others to the interest of religious education in families, in infant schools, in Sunday-schools, or in academies; and others to the encouragement and promotion of theological education. This is right. The advantages thus arising, are greatly augmented and multiplied.

But what is to be done with the department of church music? Who shall fill it? It may be said in reply, perhaps that it is every body's business to sing. But the homely saying that "What is every body's business, is no body's," finds an abundant application here. The department is not filled: and yet deficient as we are in numbers and qualifications, draughts are continually made upon us, for the supply of other fields of effort. The thing ought not so to be. The interests of devotional music are sufficient to make specific claims upon laborers of the vineyard who will be faithful and persevering. As the Sunday school, for example, must have its specific officers, and teachers, &c., so must the choirs of our churches be filled with regular and well trained performers. We plead for the divisions of labor. Who will come up to our help? Who among the disciples of the Lord Jesus, will take upon themselves the responsible, though undervalued office of sacred praise? Who will come? The call is not for transient laborers. Who will enlist for life? Nay, not for life only: Who will begin while yet on earth, to practice the same divine themes of song that are heard in the sanctuary above; and thus commence in some respects a work which will last through eternity! Help *must be had*. Who among the brethren of our churches, children and youth, aged, and middle aged, will dare to bury their musical talents, instead of devoting them in the best manner to the cause of the Redeemer? Who will come? Let the individuals be found, enlisted and enrolled. We ask for no stinted numbers. The honor of God is not to be trifled with in such an important matter. Who will come?

THEORETICAL.

HARMONY.

IN our last we exhibited the three principal common chords of the major and of the minor scales. The lowest sound in a chord thus arranged, is called its *root*, and when considered in its fundamental character, it may be said to carry with it uniformly, its third, fifth, and octave; as mentioned in the last number. The fifth and octave (with respect to the root,) are the same in the minor scale as in the major; but the third being a semitone lower in the former scale than in the lat-

ter, is regarded as a characteristic note ; and is therefore never to be omitted in harmonic arrangements, without some very special and substantial reasons.

If the question here be asked why these three roots are to be considered fundamental in preference to other notes in a given scale ; we answer, first, that according to the order of their own derivation, they have a most intimate and peculiar relation to each other. The root F, for example, when struck causes C, to resound : C heard in F, also, when struck causes G to be heard ; and thus on the principle of musical vibration they have, between themselves, as we said a special relation.* Second ; no other notes of the scale, if taken as fundamentals would be found to carry the same harmonic intervals. D, E, and A, for example, in the major scale, carry *minor thirds*, and B, a *minor third and fifth* ; and a corresponding inconsistency would appear by a similar experiment in the minor scale. In the third place, these three roots combine in their several intervals, all the notes of the scale in which they are found : thus F, in the major scale carries A and C ; C carries E and G ; and G carries B and D which are all the seven. Since, then, these three chords are related to each other, by their derivation ; since no other notes of the scale carry the same harmonic intervals ; and since the three embrace between them, all the eight notes of the scale in which they occur, we are furnished with substantial reasons for considering them in the highest sense fundamental.

Of the three chords thus explained, F, which is the lowest with respect to the order of derivation, is called the under-governing or *sub-dominant* note ; C, a fifth above, is called the *tonic or key* ; and G, a fifth above C, is called the governing note or *dominant*.

But, since the three fundamental notes, sub-dominant, tonic and dominant, all, as thus far considered, carry harmony which is identically the same, how are they to be distinguished from each other ? How shall we tell, for instance, while listening, which is the tonic or key ? If we can readily do this, then the various other portions of the scale will be recognized by their relation to the three fundamentals ; and thus the musician will have a constant idea of the scale in which he is exercising, and be able to ascertain whether he is digressing in a train of modulations.

This object is effected by adding a sixth to the chord of the sub-dominant, and a seventh to the chord of the dominant. By this arrangement,

* This was explained more at length in a former number.

of the roots, F the sub-dominant in the major scale carries A, C, and D; C carries E, G, and C, as before; and G carries B, D, and F.

Sub-dominant. Tone. Dominant.

By the addition of three flats to the signatures of the above example it will represent the corresponding roots of the minor scale.

The above additions to the dominant and sub-dominant are *not always expressed* in the harmony: for other circumstances will often show sufficiently, the relations of intervals: yet whenever this relation would be rendered doubtful by the omission they are to be inserted, though at the expense of omitting some other note in the chord. Thus, in the sub-dominant, the 5th or 8th may be omitted in favor of the added sixth; and in the dominant, the 3d, 5th or 8th in favor of the 7th. But more of this, in another place.

The dominant and sub-dominant thus constituted, no longer take rank among the concords; but are regarded as fundamental discords: the two chords differ at once from each other, and from the tonic or key.

Each of the three fundamentals thus furnished with a specific character, the harmonies of the rest of the scale are readily settled. To take the letters in their accustomed order; C of the above major scale is the tonic, D is called the *supertonic* from its being the next *above* C; E is called the sub-dominant, G the dominant; A, the *sub-median* from its distance *half-way between* the sub-dominant, and tonic *above*, and B is called the *leading note* because it stands within one semitone of the tonic, and when heard, under certain circumstances, very readily *leads* us to expect the next note will be the tonic itself. The supertonic, median and sub-median carry, as above intimated, minor thirds in the major scale, and the leading note carries a minor third and fifth: while in the minor scale, corresponding differences equally exclude those notes from being regarded as fundamental.

It will be recollected that in the minor scale the ascending series differ from the descending, in its sixth and seventh notes being elevated, each a semitone by the insertion of an accidental. Bearing this circumstance in mind, it will readily be perceived that while the sub-dominant and tonic of the minor scale carry minor thirds, the dominant by the use of the accidental character at the leading note, carries a major third. This,

indeed, it uniformly does in both scales alike, *when used as a governing note*; and in this case, the tonic harmony which succeeds, decides the character of the scale. As for the remaining harmonies of the minor scale; the supertonic, carries a minor third and fifth, the mediant carries a major third; the *sub*-mediant when ascending carries a minor third and fifth, and when descending, a major third and fifth. The seventh note of the scale, when used as a leading note, carries the same harmony as the supertonic; and when not thus used, carries a major third and fifth. All this will be the more readily retained in memory, if the student step by step, marks down the intervals and chords as we have here explained them.

We have now prepared the way, to speak in our next number, of the *inversion* of chords.

QUESTIONS.

A few questions in theory are often agitated by uneducated musicians to little purpose. Some of them it may not be amiss to notice in this place.

1. Since the major scale is much more prevalent in musical compositions, than the minor, how does it happen that the primitive major has C instead of A to commence with, in the application of the seven letters to the staff?

In answer to this question, it may suffice to say, that, in the days when the scale was arranged and settled, the minor scale was the most generally in use.

2. Why does the modern minor scale differ in its ascending and descending series?

This is a standing question. We would propose *another* question in reply. Why do the chords in the minor scale receive the present arrangement? Scales are obtained by analyzing the chords which are employed in musical composition: and if we can find a reason for the existing harmonic arrangements, *that* will account for the difference in the ascending and descending minor scales. This reason is to be found in the rules of musical composition.

3. Of what use are the figures placed beneath the base, in pieces of music? This question continually occurs, among pupils in vocal music. In the next number it will find a full answer under the head of *harmony*, as a continuation of the previous article. Suffice it here to say, that the figures are indices of the chords which make up the harmony; and that they are useful, chiefly to the organist, and the theoretical student.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE ORGAN.

WE have felt hitherto, very little inclination to discuss questions that relate to the employment of the organ in devotional music; because, in all questions of expediency, there will of course be differences of opinion, even among those who are the best informed, and the most disinterested, in their views. Yet since, as we formerly intimated, there are some special considerations respecting this topic, which ought to be kept in view, we are not unwilling to aid in bringing them before the public, as opportunities may offer.

The following article, though it comes to us from an unknown source, gives a pretty fair representation of the popular feeling in favor of the use of the organ. On this account we choose to insert it; reserving to ourselves the privilege of a free-comment:

For the Musical Magazine.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

MR. EDITOR:—That *music* has a salutary and pleasing effect in aiding the devotions of a spiritual people, is, I believe, seldom, if ever questioned. After the mind has been exercised by listening to the spirit-stirring appeal, the powerful argumentation, or the awfully impressive warning, of the affectionate and faithful pastor, we can scarcely conceive of any thing better calculated to fasten upon the mind, the solemn impressions already made, and at the same time, to awaken all the sympathetic and pleasing emotions of the soul, than music. If any thing more is necessary to fill the soul of the believer with “joy unspeakable and full of glory,” after the promises of God and his own future happy prospects have been faithfully portrayed by the “sweet messenger of peace,” if any thing further is necessary to form in his soul an ardent anticipation of a celestial paradise, it is the lovely harmonious melody of sweet sounds.

This cannot be questioned, as far as regards merely vocal music: but it is seriously doubted by some of the leaders in Zion, whether the deep-toned Organ, “the stringed instrument, the lute and the harp,” should be called in to assist in this very important part of the devotions of

God's people. The following extract contains (as I think) correct ideas on this important subject. Describing a Cathedral in Malaga, the author remarks :

" The two organs with their deep rich tone, gave an air of solemnity and inspiration to the place, more impressive than the spreading incense of the altar, the majesty of the pillared dome, or the hallowing twilight, which softly bathed each object.

" While listening to these noble instruments, in the sublime part they bore in the anthem, I could not but feel a mortifying regret, at the mistaken hostility with which so many in my own country, (the U. S.) regard these moving aids to the devotions of the sanctuary. * * * I do not suppose, that our aspirations will be very much deepened or elevated by the trills of a reed, or the quavers of a string. But this is no reason, why an instrument, which can indeed discourse 'eloquent music,' and especially the organ, with its solemnity and power, should be expelled from our worship. True, it has not an innate sense of its melodious vocation, nor a soul of conscious penitence or praise; nor has the human voice; yet both may easily aid and express, in some degree, the fervors of our reverent homage. David, whose inspired harmonies still live in the church, and will, while there is a grateful penitent upon earth, celebrated the 'loving kindness and faithfulness' of his benevolent Preserver, 'upon an instrument of ten strings, upon the psaltry, and upon the harp, with a solemn sound.' When our sanctity shall exceed his, it may perhaps, be an additional indication of piety and wisdom, to dispense with all these auxiliaries in our religious services."

The objection commonly urged against the use of Instruments in the Sanctuary, is, that "their music is too light and airy, not sufficiently devotional, that it draws our attention from God and things divine, in short, that it rather pleases the ear, than solemnizes the mind." Such *music we* do not recommend. It is not and ought not to become church music. We would be the *last* to have the "*holy place* where God dwelleth" desecrated by the light and mirthful song, or by the martial airs, which should rather precede an earthly conqueror, than be brought in to aid the devotions of those who are worshipping "the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." But shall we object to the use of Musical Instruments in the Sanctuary, because the privilege is abused?

And is *any* form or performance of worship, in this sinful world, faultless? Some of the professed ministers of Jesus Christ, are doubtless, clothed only with the *external* garments of the "*angels of light*?"

The fervent aspirations of a devout and pious heart, when expressed in the language of simplicity and truth, are calculated to please and instruct the holy listener.

Bring in the aid of poesy, and breathe into the *versified* aspirations the spirit of "soft music," and the hearer is enraptured, and is led to *admire Him*, who has endowed his creatures with so many means of enjoyment. Then add the clear impressive notes, of a good toned and well tuned Organ, and the effect is complete; the ears are enchanted with sounds which fill the soul with heavenly emotions, "and might almost induce an angel to pause on his earnest commission!"

DYONDAD.

N. Y. Oct. 27th, 1835.

REMARKS. An organ is an instrument of such transcendent powers that it requires great skill and judgment in the player, in order to make it properly subservient to the *vital* interests of *enlightened* devotion. It must be played by a *workman*, or it will not give satisfaction, or secure devotional results. This workman must have an expensive instrument, and be paid for playing. He must be a serious man, or the style will be wanting in gravity. He must be an amiable man or he will not succeed well with the singers; in which case the instrument will become of necessity the sum-total of the music. He must understand vocal effect or yield the precedence, to a vocal leader of some eminence, or with all his seriousness and amiable deportment, there will be no efficient enunciation of the words. The instrument will still predominate and overpower every thing. The vocal leader too, must in this case, be paid; and he must be of the right character. He must understand his business, and be able to secure at once the good will of the organist, and the confidence and co-operation of the singers. Experience and observation, in all these matters, are preferable to theory and speculation. And *here* there is abundance of painful testimony. At least in nine cases out of ten, the experiment with the organ among congregationalists, has failed in some one of the above points, so entirely as to prevent the proper influence of vocal enunciation. The singers neither in the choir nor out of it, are found to speak intelligibly to each other. The instrument drowns every thing, absorbs the interest of the exercise, and discourages the faithful cultivation of vocal talent. What has so frequently happened in time past, *may continue* to occur, and this notwithstanding all our good wishes and expectations to the contrary.

And is this all? We have said nothing as yet about the necessity of vital piety in the organist, and chorister. Let the reader look about him and see how the case stands in *this* respect. This is a delicate topic; but a few glances behind the curtain of the choir, at the organ loft, would more than suffice to show that it is an *important* one!

But our correspondent and the author he quotes seem to have overlooked a fundamental principle in musical expression. There is a religion of the *imagination* which "plays round the head but comes not near the heart." The devotees of this religion, may have an abundance of solemn emotions, even in a heathen temple; and be fully alive to all that is beautiful, grand, sublime, and imposing. The instruments and voices, that would not only produce such results, but strike through them to the heart, and secure the *prevalence of legitimate emotions*, have a most difficult and responsible task before them. Pious musicians understand and feel more on this subject than they can well express.

Here, again, let facts speak. In the examples, comparatively few, where cultivation secures good vocal execution, adapted to the powers and style of the organ; there are in too many cases the strong *appearances*, of that species of unproductive sentimentality which we have specified. We are sorry to say it; but, if the truth must be told, we are ready to affirm that this is one of the difficulties which is not easily overcome, in practice, among presbyterian and congregational churches. Instrumental music is cultivated among them wholly on secular principles; and where there is so much that ministers to the feelings of mere musical enthusiasm, it is found very difficult to engraft any thing better upon it, that will actually win its way to the heart.

In preaching and in public prayer, this principle is well understood. We all love beautiful language, elegant illustrations, striking comparisons, sublime descriptions, and novelty of detail; and we love, in view of these things to enter into the emotions of the speaker, to sympathise with him and praise his performance. But who does not know that in proportion as these attractions have been cultivated and promoted in connexion with feelings of earthly interest, and mere tasteful gratification, while the work of heart felt devotion has been forgotton, and the spirit of self-consecration and fervent persevering prayer and holy meditation have been neglected—who does not know, that, just in proportion as one of these courses has been pursued by the speaker and his hearers, to the neglect of the other; that just in the same proportion, is the probability, that his performances will become as empty brass or a tinkling cymbal, to the individuals who love to hang upon the eloquence of his

lip! Every one understands this principle. And here we observe a perfect illustration of the case before us. This is the *mere music* of eloquence. The cases are as we conceive, entirely parallel. The music is well enough in its place, but it requires something in addition, something to regulate it, and give it proper direction. Those who would make it the means of public religious edification, must themselves enter fully, and habitually into the spirit of religion: and, in proportion as the music of oratory is increased, must heart-felt consecration increase, if the right influences are to be secured.

Vocal music has also its difficulties. The sin of heartlessness, is not chargeable *alone* upon the instrumental department. Very far from it. There is enough here that calls loudly for reformation. Nor are we prepared to say, that in every possible case, it will be found more difficult to manage with an organ, than without one. The example of other denominations that are confined to a ritual, would be in the face of such a conclusion. And we should be sorry to think that individual congregations could not elsewhere be found, that show a good result in favor of the organ. We do not speak of this thing as a practical impossibility. We do not hesitate to say that the organ *might* be rendered greatly subservient to the true interests of devotional music. We speak of the difficulties in the case, that congregations may be induced to count the cost, in every important point of view; and be prepared to act intelligently in reference to the question which has come before us.

For the Musical Magazine.

MR. EDITOR:—Your quotations from our poetic versions of the psalms, have pleased me, and led me to make an occasional observation of my own. And now, just by way of specimen, what think you, is the true import of the two following lines of the 119th Psalm, 104th verse?

“Seven times a day I lift my hands
“And pay my thanks to thee”?

The prose translation reads, “seven times a day, do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments.” The corresponding passages, show that the Psalmist gave praise in *song*. This was his regular method, his established habit. But the above couplet is used by thousands of professed Christians, who neglect entirely the songs of praise. Not

even once a day or once a week do they thus give thanks. Neither they nor their children nor their children's children after them, are taught to sing the high praises of God. Is not this a shame? We are commanded to admonish one another in the language of the Psalms; and now since this is a solemn injunction of the Apostles in the New Testament, there is no setting it aside, as belonging to the old dispensation. The rule is binding. Your unmusical readers, therefore, are invited to receive the admonition. Let them read the Psalms with self-application, and see whether it is possible for them to neglect in their families the constituted method of praising God, and remain guiltless in his sight.

Yours,

A PARENT.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Up at the Gospel's glorious call!
Country and kindred what are they?
Rend from thy hear', these charmers, *all*,
Christ needs thy service, hence away.

Tho' free the parting tear may rise,
Tho' high may roll the boisterous wave,
Go, find thy home 'neath foreign skies,
And shroud thee in a stranger's grave.

Perchance, the Hindoo's languid child,
The infant at the Burman's knee,
The shiverer in the arctic wild,
Shall bless the Eternal Sire for thee.

And what hath Earth compar'd to this?
Knows she of wealth or joy like thine?
e ransom'd heathens' heavenly bliss,
The plaudit of the Judge divine!—**Mrs. SIGOURNEY.**